DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 479 044 SO 035 124

AUTHOR	Sineshaw, Tilahun
TITLE	Education, Schooling, and the Prospects of Global Peace.
PUB DATE	2002-02-00
NOTE	16p.; In: An Imperfect World: Resonance from the Nation's Violence. 2002 Monograph Series, Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the National Association of African American Studies, the National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies, the National Association of Native American Studies, and the International Association of Asian Studies (Houston, TX, February 11-16, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Foreign Countries; *International Relations; *Peace; *Terrorism; War
IDENTIFIERS	*Ethiopia; Freire (Paulo); *Global Issues; McLaren (Peter); Personal Experiences

ABSTRACT

The questions of whether international terrorism could be controlled only through waging war, what institutions could be enlisted in the service of creating sustainable global peace, and could there be viable measures taken to undercut potential sources of global terror are questions posed in this paper. It does not offer complete answers to these questions, but it seeks to draw people's attention to a direction leading to proper reflection. The paper discusses the social ideas of Peter L. McLaren, Lev Vygotsky, and Paulo Freire. It provides readers with a brief summary of a localized and personal narrative of the author's experiences in Ethiopia in the 1970s and 1980s. It suggests that it is hard to accept the proposition that war alone would serve as the instrument of creating peace, particularly under circumstances of fighting global terror. The paper discusses the New Global Forum (NGF), a forum that utilizes new pedagogical approaches to global peace. It states that one institution that needs to be reinvented in the contemporary world is the school, both traditional and modern. Implicit in this suggestion is a call for a different kind of school that encourages diversity and creativity and not mere conformity. The paper concludes by providing a brief outline of the NGF, including some of the characteristics that it should embody. (BT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 479 044

EDUCATION, SCHOOLING, AND THE PROSPECTS OF GLOBAL PEACE

TILAHUN SINESHAW
RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
MAHWAH, NEW JERSEY

SO 035 124

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. Berry Jr.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Education, Schooling, and the Prospects of Global Peace

Questions asked:

Could there be viable measures that can be taken to undercut potential sources of global terror? Could international terrorism be controlled only through waging war? Is global security attainable via diversity of actions or just through brute force? How far would "the star wars approach" to understanding complex global phenomenon take us in creating sustainable peace in our fragile world? Could we think of alternatives other than war in the struggle against the sources of terror? Does physical victory over a defined terrorist group necessarily lead to a total victory over terrorism? Would an ultimate victory over global terror call for the democratization of societies everywhere? What institution(s) could be made in the service of creating sustainable global peace? What role should rich democratic countries play in supporting grassroots-based democratic movements? These are tough questions, but, questions that need to be asked, nonetheless. I do not have complete answers to these questions, but I will try to

draw your attention to a direction that I think will lead us to properly reflect.

A Perspective Adopted:

As I pondered over these questions, I thought of couplets that I saved from readings of the works of some public intellectuals. While I do not intend to do an expose on the words of these thinkers, I would want my readers to use them as a background context to situate the points and suggestions I make here. On his discourse about the dialectic between tradition and institution, Peter L. McLaren, suggests that

> ...The best way to honor the accomplishments of a tradition is not to canonize but to reinvent it.

Throughout human history, traditions and the institutions that hold them and pass them on to successive generations have played adaptive functions for societies within which they originated and sprawled. Ideas and actions that contribute for the protection and sustenance of the sociological unit form dominant traditions.

To the extent that such ideas and actions generate energy for the propagation of the social unit, the tradition stamps cohesion

within a matrix of social history. On the contrary, ideas and actions that play destructive roles in the life of the social entity get selected out and thrown into the dustbins of history. In other words traditions that are harmful to group cohesion die out as a result of the social tension they create and project. The ideas and actions that formed productive dominant traditions within a socio-cultural entity outgrow their positive contributions when significant changes occur. And, as the ancient Roman philosopher, Lucretius some two thousand years ago observed, change is the only constant. What this philosophical assertion suggests is that change permeates all aspects of life in nature and society all the time. The survival and, hence the success of traditions, resides in the plasticity it exhibits when dealing with such changes. It may therefore be conceptualized that the struggle to prevail is the struggle against change both in nature and society. The relationship between survival and change thus calls for an adoption of a dialectical approach in conceptualizing it.

Societies change and ideas and actions that served them productively at one time can become obsolete and dysfunctional at other times. The cultural knowledge and the social institutions that nurtured and preserved it should therefore need periodic overhaul

themselves in order to continue rendering their adaptive functions. McLaren's choice of reinvention of tradition over its canonization becomes very pertinent when viewed in the dialectical context and text of change and the tools created to dealing with it.

Consonant with McLaren's view, traditions that have outgrown themselves in terms of their adaptive significance need thorough reinvention before they degenerate into tools of decadence and irrelevance. A continual re-examination and reinvention of institutions that embody values and ideas that foment destructive actions could therefore save the world from volatile events that agonize and antagonize our common human destiny. Shouldn't institutions that serve as conduits for terrorism be interrogated and reinvented since terrorism is antithetical to our common human destiny? Should religious and secular institutions be sacrosanct just for the sake of preserving tradition? Shouldn't they be thoroughly examined in light of their contribution to the common human destiny? Likewise, one of my favorite Russian thinkers, Lev Vygotsky, had long observed that thoughts, skills, and actions appear first on the social plane and then on the psychological plane after having been internalized by individuals. Vygotsky's argument for the social origins of consciousness and

the importance of reinventing the social plane to reconstitute the psychological plane emanates out of his narrative about the tension between social being and consciousness, which are integral parts of a whole that propel change.

Just like McLaren, Vygotsky believes that traditions expressed in the form of cultural knowledge have to be questioned rather than revered for eternity lest they become hindrances in social progress. Thus, we need to reexamine institutions from time to time and reinvent them when found embodying and nurturing harmful traditions to the common human ethos. The preservation of our common destiny can only be attained through the creation and sustenance of global peace that, in turn, calls upon us to critically and perpetually examine traditions and institutions. Alas, global peace is the axis of the self-preservation of humanity!

How fittingly descriptive of the post-9/11/2001 global socio-political landscape McLaren and Vygotsky's ideas are, I am sure, is obvious to many here. If it is not, I trust that the nature and characteristics of the institution that I call "The New Global Forum"-NGF- the description of which will be given shortly, will clarify it.

In a similar vein, the late Brazilian educator-philosopher, Paulo Freire, in his narration of the particular and universal dialectic, had, once wrote

> The regional emerges from the local just as the national arises from the regional, and the continental from the national as the worldwide emerges from the continental...Just as it is a mistake to get stuck in the local, loosing our vision of the whole, so also it is a mistake to waft above the whole, renouncing any reference to the local whence the whole has emerged.

I subscribe to Freire's understanding of the local-global dialectic. The relationship and tension between the particular and universal is interwoven, interdependent, dynamic, ever changing, and fluid and this guides my understanding of the post-9/11/2001 global socio-political terrain. Again, if we are to successfully deal with change, which we must, it is incumbent upon us that we carefully examine and develop a deep understanding of the locale-global dialectic. I also believe that this line of understanding has a potential to make a marked positive contribution to the creation and maintenance of a long lasting global peace.

A Localized Narrative:

Let me now provide you with a brief summary of a localized and personalized narrative of my own lived experience in Ethiopia in the 1970s and 1980s. I hope that you will be able to see the parallel between what McLaren, Vygotsky, and Freire had pointed out and the narrative I will present as well as the NGS (New Global Forum) that I will later characterize.

Ethiopia has been ruled by successive autocratic monarchs who had no regard for the social and economic welfare of their own subjects up until 1974. Ethiopians were never considered citizens, but assets to be used for the accumulation of wealth for the rulers, i.e., the monarchy and the nobility.

During the rein of Haile Sellasie, U.S. foreign policy was shaped by cold war politics and, hence aligned itself with what many Ethiopians considered a near-theocracy. This led most political activists to perceive the U.S. as a prime supporter of an undemocratic system of governance. This perception eventually led to a break in the diplomatic relationship between the two countries.

Gradually, the oppressive social condition radicalized a portion of the urban youth and intellectuals and brought them in

direct confrontation with the ancient regime. Along with this was created a heightened anti-U.S. sentiment. Activist political groupings were looking for an alternative system of government that eventually led to the 1974 popular upsurge.

In the fashionable style of cold-war politics, vying political groups within the country and overseas began their own infightings that culminated in a military take-over. The military dictatorship that ensued conveniently chose the then Soviet Union as its ally and sharpened its anti-U.S. rhetoric and perfected it at a mass-rally it called in the early 1980s. It was at that public gathering that dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam symbolically expressed his defiance against Ethio-US relations. In symbolic terms, he threw and broke bottles filled with blood-like liquid in front of hundreds of thousands of demonstrators. That could have been constructed as a symbolic declaration of war against the U.S.

At the same time, there were democratic voices in the country and outside who were resisting the military dictatorship. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of the Ethiopian people was apolitical and had nothing to do with what Mengistu and his cronies were doing at the time. In fact, this same regime that came to power using the popular disaffection with the monarchial rule

was oppressive to them on many fronts. Alas, it would have been terrible for any outside force to declare war on Ethiopia given the circumstances just described.

Siding with the oppressive Imperial rule cultivated the anti-U.S. sentiment that rapidly spread among the politicized youth and, in the final analysis, gave rise to what the military dictatorship dubbed an anti-imperialist stand. Here is why this story becomes relevant today.

It appears to me that policies need to be informed and shaped by the democratic ideals and principles that the U.S. espouses and not by the calculus of shortsighted and short-term political gains. We needn't become convenient allies, as we have done at one time or another, with the Haile Selassies, the Sadam Hussiens, the Bin Ladens, and the Talibans, just to make short term political gains for we know what happens when change comes! In order to frustrate the ambitions and plans of potential global terrorists, one has to carefully c.. policies that are consistent with democratic ideals. People watch discrepancies and inconsistencies. Encouraging and coaxing dictatorial regimes to democratize and allow descent within their political space will pay more in the long run than being perceived as close friends to and allies with

dictators. Making a darling out of a Musharif in Pakistan might have helped in removing the Taliban from their formal political grip on Afghanistan but left grassroot-based democratic movements in the former disaffected. It is only when societies adopt a transparent system of governance that institutions such as the madrasses (religious schools) could be publicly scrutinized and reinvented when found harboring and training potential terrorists!

I do not think that micro-managing localities via the creation of alliances with dictators at the expense of fundamental democratic principles will contribute to global peace. As an educator, I find it very hard to accept the proposition that war alone would serve as the instrument of creating peace, especially under circumstances of fighting global terror.

The New Global Forum:

Lasting peace cannot be attained and maintained until and unless we systematically and institutionally address the multifaceted issues that might have stirred the peace in the first place. The institution of what I call *fair local and regional engagement* is a sine-qua-non for creating and nurturing the common human destiny. Democratizing local and regional

authoritarian systems of governance and standing on the side of the *local soldiers of democracy,* in the long-run, creates environs that are hostile to terrorist frames of mind. The forgoing goal is particularly viable and attainable when complemented by a globally-based support of the creation of revitalized educational institutions that compete with such learning centers as the madrasses. Competing learning forums would then lead to the creation of a critical mass that would stand up to the menace of terrorist thinking. Hence, my suggestion for the institutionalization of the New Global Forum (NGF), a forum that utilizes new pedagogical approaches to global peace. Again, this suggestion is based on the assumption and strong personal conviction that what creates and sustains ideas that may lead to the kinds of terrible actions witnessed on 9/11 are housed in institutions and that such institutions may have to be radically altered through investments made through bilateral and multilateral efforts.

Investment on the reinvention of such institutions as the NGF will pay us all in the long run; it will contribute immensely to the creation of a reliable and formidable global community that is devoid of terror. It was gratifying to hear President Bush mention his idea of a "Freedom Core" in his 2002 State of the Union

address, for the idea is to send *missionaries of peace and democracy* to the part of the world that experiences only poverty, autocracy, and, in some cases, theocracy all the breeding ground of a terrorist frame of mind!

One institution that I see needs to be reinvented in the contemporary world is the school, both traditional and modern. In most cases, the school is one of the significant institutions in the modern world that creates, transmits, and reproduces values and attitudes both good and bad. A re-examination and radical alteration of this vital institution, in my opinion, will go a long way in creating frames of mind that can think independently.

Implicit in this suggestion is a call for a different kind of school that encourages diversity and creativity and not mere conformity. I am calling for a new kind of school that throws light on the politics of hope and dreams for all; a school that is guided by what Paulo Freire calls "pedagogy of hope".

Such a school would lead young minds everywhere and anywhere to search for hope not just for sheer hopefulness, but, rather critical hope that can wage war against hopelessness, pessimism, and fatalism among the world's youth. I call such a school the New Global Forum (NGF). If we are willing and

committed to reinvent the U.N., some of its branches such as the UNESCO can be entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the new school. It is not easy but it is doable! Let me end my talk by providing you with a brief outline of the NGF along with some of the characteristics that I envision for it to embody.

The NGF is a site where:

- dominant lies from old institutions are challenged
- the public interest is guarded against public corruption
- authority and freedom are fairly balanced
- internalized oppressive thoughts and values are exposed through nurturing critical consciousness
- self-and-social-transformative ideas are promoted
- both the politics of difference (identity) and the melting-pot philosophy are subjected to critical re-examination
- mutuality and interdependence are explored in light of global peace and humanity
- young minds are encouraged to be reflective and active in conducting "critical dialogues"

I strongly believe that such an institution will in the long-run safeguard the fragile world from even becoming more fragile.

SELECTED REFERENCES

Calhoun, Craig (1994). Editor. *Social Theory and the politics of identity.* Cambridge, Ma: Blackwell Publishers

Shor, Ira (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Gadotti, Moacir (1996). *Pedagogy of praxis: A dialectical philosophy of education.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

McLaren, Peter and Leonard, Peter (1993). Eds. *Paulo Freire: A critical encounter.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Freire, Paulo (1996). *Pedagogy of hope.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Freire, Paulo. (1994). *Education for critical consciousness.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Kozulin, Alex. (1986). Editor. *Thought and language.* Cambridge, Ma: MIT Press.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC REPRODUCTION RELEASE

I. Document Identification:

Title: An Imperfect World: Resonance from the Nation's Violence (2002 Monograph Series)

Editor: Lemuel Berry, Jr., Ph.D.

Corporate Source:

Publication Date: 2002

II. Reproduction Release:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please check one of the following three options and sign the release form.

_✓_ Level 1 - Permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g. electronic) and paper copy.

____ Level 2A - Permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only.

____ Level 2B - Permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only.

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but no option is marked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

Sign Here: "I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Signature: Lemuel Berry, Jr.

Position: Executive Director

Printed Name: Lemuel Berry, Jr.

Organization: NAAAS, NAHLS, NANAS, IAAS

Address: PO Box 325
Biddeford, ME 04005-0325

Telephone No: 207-~~282-1925~~-839-8009

Date: 5/20/03

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

ERIC/CHESS
2805 E. Tenth Street, #120
Bloomington, IN 47408

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfacility.org

EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2001)